



Guidelines for University Centers and Institutes

(As amended by the Academic Council on February 22, 2011)

The purpose of these Guidelines is to provide several common requirements for the initiation and continuation of Centers/Institutes, while at the same time to encourage the entrepreneurial and creative activity of faculty, and to enhance the success of the Centers/Institutes in their missions. It is recognized that Centers/Institutes vary widely; some involve only a few faculty members within a department, while others involve a large number of faculty across several departments and colleges. The following Guidelines apply to all Centers/Institutes.

Definitions

Institute

An institute is a scholarly unit with a substantial source of funding that consists of a significant number of faculty whose intellectual activities contribute to a comprehensive and multifaceted mission. An institute often involves faculty from different departments and colleges/schools. They may be umbrella organizations that contain individually chartered centers with related – but at the same time distinguishable – foci, or they may bring a number of resources and disciplines together to achieve a set of common goals.

Center

A center is a scholarly unit that normally has a single focus or mission and typically is located within a single college or department, although its faculty may draw at times on the expertise of faculty in other disciplines to support their work. A “one-person operation,” in which activity is carried out by an individual faculty member with limited support, usually does not qualify as a center recognized by the University. A center might, however consist of a group whose activities are strongly shaped by one person.

I. Procedure for Establishing a New Center/Institute

A. Proposal

Those faculty seeking to establish a Center/Institute must submit a proposal to the Dean(s) of the College(s)/School(s) in which the faculty hold an appointment. Proposals to establish a Center/Institute should specify what classification of Center/Institute is being sought: University Institute, College Institute or College Center (defined below).

B. Evaluation of Proposal

The Dean(s), in consultation with the chairperson(s) of the department(s) in which the faculty submitting the proposal hold an appointment, shall evaluate the proposal and submit a recommendation on the proposal to the Office of the Vice President for Research. The Office of the Vice President for Research shall evaluate the proposal and the recommendation of the Dean(s), and submit a recommendation to the Office of the Provost. The Provost¹ evaluates the proposal and all prior recommendations, and makes a final determination on the proposal.

C. Evaluation Criteria

Criteria to be considered in evaluating proposals to establish a new Center/Institute as an official University Unit include the following:

1. the academic credentials of all faculty members involved and the focus of research proposed for the Center/Institute;
2. the academic objectives and intellectual benefits that the establishment of such a Center/Institute can provide to faculty and students;
3. resource requirements (e.g. staff, library, laboratory space, etc.);
4. procedures for choosing Center/Institute membership, leadership, and policies for succession and change of leadership;
5. proposed funding sources and the means for financially and academically sustaining the Center/Institute.

D. Approved Proposals

If the proposal for a Center/Institute is approved, the Provost shall assign the Center/Institute a classification described in Section IV, except that if the Provost determines that the newly established Center/Institute should be classified as a University Institute, he or she must obtain approval from the President to assign this classification. In addition, the Provost shall assign a Supervisory Unit to the newly established Center/Institute. The Provost may change the Supervisory Unit at any time by communicating the change to the Center/Institute Director, the chief academic leader of the current Supervisory Unit, and the chief academic leader of the newly assigned Supervisory Unit.

E. Communication of Decision

The final determination of the Provost on the proposal will be communicated to the faculty who submitted the proposal, the Dean(s) of the College(s)/School(s) in which the faculty hold an appointment, and—if the proposal is approved—the chief academic leader of the Supervisory Unit. If the proposal is not approved, the faculty who submitted the proposal should consult the Dean to determine the status of the unit as it relates to the College.

¹ In future references in these Guidelines, the term “Provost” is intended to refer to the “Provost or the Provost’s designee.”

II. Oversight of Centers and Institutes

A. Appointment of Director

College Center/Institute Directors will be appointed by the chief academic leader of the Supervisory Unit overseeing the Center/Institute and are subject to periodic review. University Center/Institute Directors are appointed by the Provost. Except in extraordinary circumstances, the appointment of a University Center/Institute Director is subject to formal review at least every five years.

B. Expectations of Supervisory Unit

A designate of the Supervisory Unit should meet regularly with each Director of a Center/Institute reporting to the Supervisory Unit. In most cases, these meetings will occur regularly. These meetings should be utilized to:

1. monitor the progress of the Center/Institute;
2. assist the Center/Institute in strategic and programmatic planning; and
3. connect the Center/Institute to other complementary activities on campus that can augment the programs of the Center/Institute.

C. Expectations of Center/Institute

Each Center/Institute Director should prepare an Annual Report of its activities to be presented to its Supervisory Unit, with copies made available to appropriate Chairs, Deans, and the Provost. The annual report should include the following information:

1. Summaries of scholarly and instructional activities sponsored by the Center/Institute, such as lectures, conferences, workshops;
2. Data on enrollments in sponsored courses and degree programs, if applicable;
3. Summaries of publications of the Center/Institute and of its affiliated faculty;
4. Accounting of the expenditure of sponsored research funds;
5. Current list of Center/Institute membership;
6. Plans for the Center/Institute for the coming year; and
7. Other relevant information requested by the Supervisory Unit.

D. Registration of Centers/Institutes

Within five months of the original adoption of these Guidelines, all entities currently purporting to be Centers/Institutes must register with the University through a process established by the Office of the Provost.

The Office of the Provost will evaluate the information submitted by each purported Center/Institute through the registration process to verify that the purported Center/Institute is still active and/or reporting to the appropriate Supervisory Unit. The Provost may dissolve any purported Center/Institute he or she judges as a result of the registration process to be inactive, change the Supervisory Unit of any purported Center/Institute at the conclusion of the registration process, and assign an appropriate classification to any purported Center/Institute in accordance with the designation criteria identified herein. If the Provost determines that a purported Center/Institute should be classified as a University Institute, he or she must obtain approval from the President before assigning this classification.

III. Procedures for Regular Review of Centers/Institutes

A. Timing of Review

Each Center/Institute is expected to undergo an internal review after its first three to five years of existence, followed by subsequent internal reviews approximately every five to seven years. With regard to Centers/Institutes that are already in existence, the Supervisory Unit will set a timetable for the initial review in consultation with the Office of the Provost. The Provost may require a Center/Institute to undergo an external review in lieu of an internal review. If an external funding agency requires a different schedule or format of review, those requirements may take precedence and may substitute for a university-administered review.

B. Format and Purpose of Review

The Supervisory Unit is responsible for administering a required review, and the Center/Institute under review will normally be responsible for the expenses associated with the review. In all reviews, the Center/Institute will be asked to report on its mission, membership, scholarly activity, instructional contributions, academic impact, management, reporting structure, and other relevant factors. A detailed financial report will also be generated for each review.

The emphasis in the review is to evaluate and enhance the quality of research and instructional activity devoted to fulfilling the mission of the Center/Institute. The review will serve as a mechanism for the University and the Center/Institute to work together to increase support, raise visibility, maintain high scholarly standards, adjust/renew the mission of the Center/Institute, and enhance the impact of the Center/Institute on the University's educational mission.

Each review will involve a reevaluation of the classification of the Center/Institute. If the Supervisory Unit concludes as a result of the review that the classification of the Center/Institute should be changed, the Supervisory Unit will submit a request for the change to the Provost. The Provost will make the final determination on the request, except that if the Provost determines that the Center/Institute should be classified as a University Institute, he or she must obtain approval from the President for assigning this classification. Ordinarily, requests for a change in classification of a Center/Institute outside of this review process will be disfavored. However, Supervisory Units have discretion to submit such a request. These requests will be reviewed by the Provost in the same manner as those requests that arise as a result of a review.

The Provost may at any time request that a Center/Institute provide information to support its existing classification and may reclassify the Center/Institute based on the information provided.

C. Results of Review and Probationary Procedures

At the conclusion of a review, a final report will be developed and shared with the Center/Institute Director and the chief academic leader of the Supervisory Unit. The final report should include recommendations on actions the Center/Institute could take in order to improve.

If a review shows inadequate performance in terms of the Center's/Institute's academic objectives, intellectual benefits, or quality of research, then the Supervisory Unit will

ordinarily put the Center/Institute on probation by providing written notice to the Center/Institute Director of the decision and the reasons for the decision. Once a Center/Institute is placed on probation, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Within four months of notification of the probationary status, a Committee will be constituted by the Supervisory Unit to evaluate the status of the Center/Institute. This committee will be composed of: (1) one member chosen by the Center/Institute Director, (2) one member chosen by the Supervisory Unit, and (3) one member chosen by the Provost. The Supervisory Unit will appoint, in consultation with the Provost, one member as the chair.
2. Within six months of its formation, the Committee will recommend actions the Center/Institute should take to remedy the deficiencies that were the grounds for placing the Center/Institute on probation. The Committee's recommendations will be presented to the Center/Institute membership, the Supervisory Unit, and the Provost.
3. After the presentation of the Committee's recommendations and within two years of the initial notification of probationary status, the Center/Institute may petition the Supervisory Unit for removal of probationary status. The Supervisory Unit shall lift probationary status if it concludes that the Committee's recommendations have been addressed adequately and that the deficiencies that were the grounds for placing the Center/Institute on probation have been remedied. If these deficiencies have not been adequately addressed—as judged by the Supervisory Unit—within two years of the initial notification of probationary status, the matter will be referred to the Provost for appropriate action, which could include dissolution of the Center/Institute by the Provost. Before dissolving a University Institute, the Provost must obtain the approval of the President.

In circumstances of gross underperformance, the Provost has the authority to immediately dissolve a Center/Institute without first placing the Center/Institute on probation, except that the Provost must obtain the approval of the President to dissolve a University Institute.

IV. Summary of Classification Characteristics

When the classification of a unit is at issue under these Guidelines, the following classifications and related characteristics apply.

University Institute

University Institutes normally exhibit the following characteristics:

- i) supporting endowment exceeds fifteen million dollars (\$15,000,000);
- ii) fifteen (15) or more faculty actively participate in the unit's activities; and
- iii) unit's mission involves substantial research activity and significant engagement with external constituencies at the national and/or international level.

A University Institute typically reports to the Office of the Provost, the Office of the Vice President for Research, or under special circumstances to a College Dean.

University Research Center

The classification, University Research Center, will be used only in cases where the activity of the entity is substantial and primarily cross-college and is supported in consultation with the Deans. A University Research Center normally exhibits the following characteristics:

- i) Annual budget exceeds two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000);
- ii) Ten (10) or more faculty actively participate in the unit's activities from across schools/colleges; and
- iii) Unit's mission involves substantial research activity.

A University Research Center typically reports to the Vice President for Research (or his/her designee).

College Institute

College Institutes normally exhibit the following characteristics:

- i) annual budget exceeds two hundred and fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000);
- ii) ten (10) or more faculty actively participate in the unit's activities; and
- iii) unit's mission involves substantial research activity.

A College Institute typically reports to the Office of the Vice President for Research or a College Dean (or his/her designee).

College Center

College Centers normally exhibit the following characteristics:

- i) annual budget exceeds fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000);
- ii) five (5) or more faculty actively participate in the unit's activities; and
- iii) unit's mission involves some research activity.

A College Center typically reports to a College Dean (or his/her designee).

Academic Support Unit

Academic Support Units normally exhibit the following characteristics:

- i) annual budget exceeds one hundred thousand dollars (\$100,000); and
- ii) mission involves substantial activity in support of academic endeavors through significant engagement with a broad set of constituents (e.g. students or faculty from multiple departments).

The Academic Support Unit typically reports to the Office of the Provost or a Dean (or his/her designee).

Program of Interest

All Centers/Institutes that do not meet the above criteria are considered programs of interest and will typically report to a College Dean or his/her designee, who will have authority over the status of the program of interest.

V. Amendments to Guidelines

The Provost may propose substantive amendments to these Guidelines by submitting such amendments to the Executive Committee of the Academic Council. The Executive Committee may either adopt the proposed amendments by majority vote or submit the proposed amendments to the full Academic Council for consideration and adoption.